

Transesophageal Echocardiogram

General Information

A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) records ultrasound images of your heart. The transducer, about the size of a normal piece of food, is mounted on the end of a flexible tube, about the size of your index finger. The tube is placed in your mouth and guided down your esophagus (swallowing tube).

You will be given medicine to help numb the back of your throat. This will make swallowing the tube easier.

The TEE gives excellent pictures of your heart because the heart is next to your esophagus.

Before the Procedure

- If you have diabetes, talk with your doctor about taking your medicine. Follow any special instructions.
- Do not eat or drink anything six hours before the test.
- Take any medications with a small sip of water.
- If you are not staying in the hospital overnight, plan to have a responsible adult drive you home and stay with you for 8 hours after the test.
- You will sign a consent form.

During the Procedure

- In the exam room, you will be asked to undress down to your waist. You will receive a hospital gown to wear.
- If you wear dentures, you will be asked to remove them.
- Electrocardiogram (EKG) patches will be put on your chest to monitor your heartbeat.
- A blood pressure cuff will be put on your arm to monitor your blood pressure.
- A probe will be put on a finger to monitor the amount of oxygen in your blood.
- An intravenous (IV) line will be inserted in your hand or arm for fluids or medicines.
- You will be awake during the test, but you will be given medicine to you more comfortable and relaxed.

- Your throat will be sprayed with a numbing medicine. This medicine will stop your gag reflex.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side during this test while the doctor inserts the flexible tube. A bite block may be placed in your mouth to rest against your teeth.
- The tip of the tube produces sound waves. The sound waves bounce off your heart and are changed into a picture on the screen.
- The cardiologist will move the tube into place and take pictures of your heart and blood flow for about 15 to 20 minutes.

You may feel the tube move. It should not cause you pain or breathing problems.

Bubble Study

A bubble study may be done during the TEE. A saline (salt water) solution is injected into an arm vein. Ultrasound tracks the solution as it flows through your heart. This is a painless test.

After the Procedure

- Your heart, blood pressure and oxygen levels will be monitored for about 30 minutes after the tube is removed.
- Once you are awake and are alert, you will be sent back to your room or be able to go home. Have someone drive you home.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 2 hours after the test.
- Do not eat hot food or drink for 6 hours after the procedure.
- Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure.
- Do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure.
- You may have a dry, scratchy throat. You may drink lots of water and use cough drops to soothe your throat.
- Your ordering provider will get the test results. They will follow up with you regarding your plan of care..